



## Driving Ms. Pyle

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, July 07, 2008

### City Hall Diary

A while ago I wrote that I wanted to tour each council district. Well, I got my wish. I have been touring San Jose over the past few months and last Friday I spent the morning with my colleague, Nancy Pyle, who represents District 10.

I met Ms. Pyle off Blossom Hill Road where we began the tour driving through the Hoffman Via Monte SNI neighborhood, which is right next to Pioneer High School—and, where I believe we made a mistake in planning. This area has about 40-50 apartment buildings that are clustered on three adjoining streets. This 1970's planning mistake is replicated all over San Jose. Perhaps the recent focus of using RDA funds in partnership with the code enforcement will encourage landlords to clean up their properties. Neglect of the property leads to blight which leads to people not caring about their area. It's nice to know that the SNI program has brought improvements to the area. Last year, I attended the grand opening of the new community center which was the number-one priority for the Hoffman Via Monte SNI.

We then went on what I call the "Almaden Valley Home Tour!"

Having grown up in San Jose and having friends that live in Almaden, I thought I had seen every street. However, I soon realized that I had not seen everything D-10 has to offer. There are some incredible streets with vintage ranch houses and houses that I pictured as being like ones in Los Altos, complete with families of deer passing by. One advantage of having housing stock occupied by upper income families is that some of these individuals start companies that employ people. If these individuals are living in Almaden, it is less likely for those new companies to be located in Palo Alto and Mountain View. At least that's the hope.

On the way out to the Almaden Urban Reserve we passed the historic Feed and Fuel. It's a shame that it is closed; it was like a tavern in the old west. The Almaden Reserve is HUGE (1000-plus acres) and quite

scenic. This is the area where former Vice Mayor Pat Dando proposed building soccer fields but was met with opposition. The questions that came to my mind were: Do we plan for the development of this land now? If we plan, does it lead us to build on it prematurely? Is there an alternative route other than Almaden Expressway for the future? Where will the water come from? If we do “nothing,” there will be one house per 20 acres but no master plan—is this a “bad” thing in an effort to preserve open space?

Our tour also included the location of the tragic accident on Mockingbird Lane where Leland students died in the mid-80s while driving too fast. In this particular case, the youths came over a steep hill (and got some serious air) and crashed right into a garbage truck. Three of the four students died—very sad.

We stopped off for a tour of the Almaden Library and Community Center. What a gem! It’s an impressive structure teeming with people of all ages.

We drove the outline of the district and finished at a future VTA development site. There is a VTA station at Capitol and Highway 87 which has a surface parking lot. The VTA would like to build a transit-oriented development at this light rail station. The biggest questions from the neighborhood are how tall and how many units? I am glad that I am not the only one with the same issues; even District 10 has to wrestle with the density question.

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